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REMAINS OF THE TEMPLE AT JERUSALEM.¹

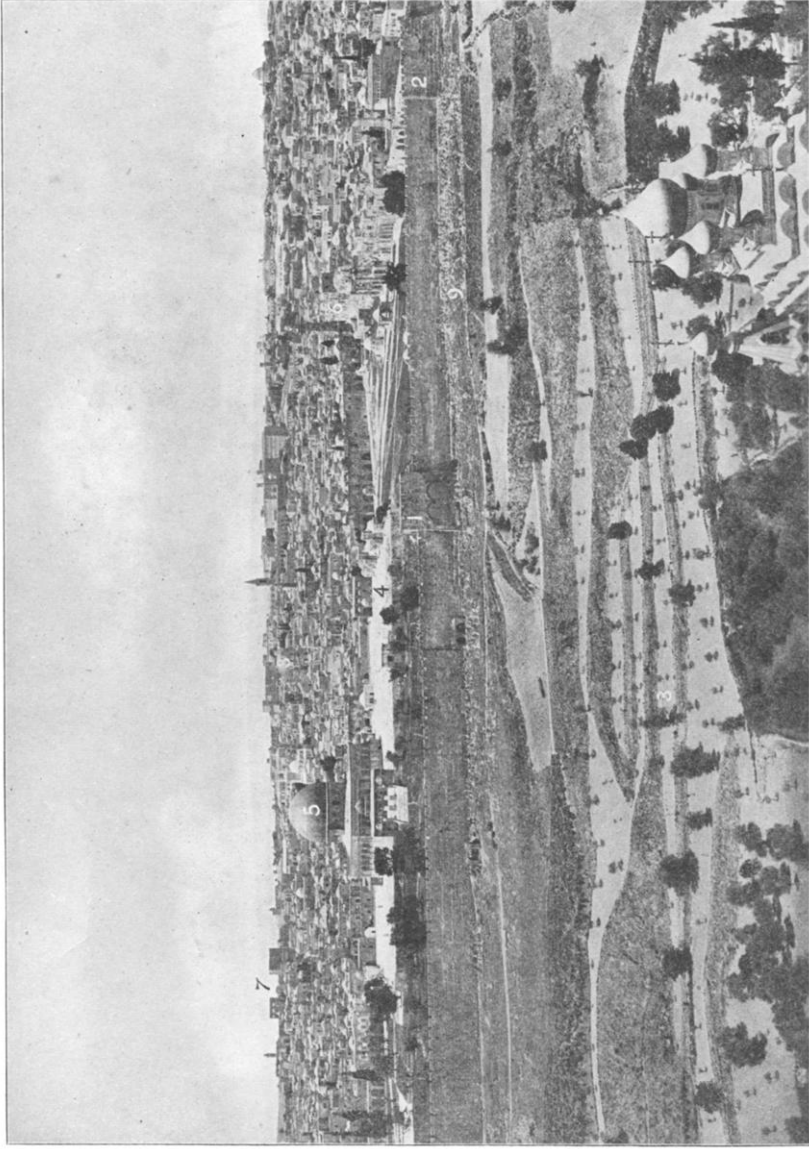
By REV. J. L. LEEPER, D.D.,
Chicago, Ill.

NOT at Athens only were the ancients "very religious." Their religious feeling expressed itself in buildings the most magnificent and enduring the world has ever seen, products of architectural if not of engineering skill. But for richness of decoration, spaciousness of courts, and beauty of situation the sanctuary of the Hebrews at Jerusalem surpassed all other ancient temples, even those of Thebes and Palmyra. The remains of this temple, even though few, fill the spectator with wonder. By means of these, and the literature upon the subject, the imagination is able to re-create to some extent that splendid panorama upon which Jesus looked from Olivet's slope.

The temple was conceived by David, erected by Solomon, rebuilt by Zerubbabel, again by Herod. Though not permitted to take a single step in its erection, David steadily accumulated from the spoils of his enemies and the revenues of his kingdom a fund for the purpose (1 Chron. 22:14). This vast accumulation of treasure, together with the design, plan, and location, was transmitted to Solomon. The spot indicated by the divine oracle was the rock summit of Moriah, the traditional site of the Abrahamic offering. It was the threshing-floor of one Araunah, a Jebusite, from whom David purchased it. In order to obtain sufficient area for the temple courts, a plateau was formed by building a wall around the summit of Moriah and filling the space within. That plateau is now known as the Haram area, the inclosing wall of which occupies for the most part the lines of the ancient battlements. Important portions of the sub-structure still remain, which it is our purpose now to trace.

The wall upon the east side follows the declivity which is seen in the frontispiece to rise in terraces two hundred feet from the

¹ Illustrated with photographs by the author.



THE TEMPLE AREA AS NOW SEEN FROM THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.

valley of the Kidron. This hillside is now difficult of ascent; but in ancient times it must have been more so, especially at the southeast corner where excavation has shown the bed of the Kidron to have been forty feet deeper and seventy feet nearer the wall than at the present time.

We will begin our study of the temple remains at the northeast corner of the Haram area (see the frontispiece, Fig. 2). The indefatigable labors of Sir Charles Warren and his fellow-workmen demonstrated that this corner stands on the north side of a ravine now filled in so that the wall rises from the bed of the ravine one hundred and forty feet beneath the surface. Many of the stones are from seventeen to twenty-four feet in length and from three to four feet in height. The five or six courses seen above the surface from without the wall are *in situ*. On the lower courses Phœnician characters, painted red, were found, with the trickling of the paint on the upper side, which showed that the marks had been placed upon the blocks while yet in the quarry. The wall rises in an unbroken mass fifty feet above the bedrock, at which point a tower begins to develop. This is effected by setting back the stones in the wall about six inches, while in that portion which is to form the tower they are set back but one inch; when the surface is reached seventy feet higher, the tower has a clear projection of seven feet. This tower is erroneously called the Tower of Antonio, as that tower stood on the cut scarp of rock at the northwest corner of the Haram area. This cyclopean masonry is undoubtedly the work of the early Hebrew kings.

From the bed of the above-mentioned ravine the rock on which the wall stands was found to rise toward the south until it approached to within thirty feet of the surface at the Golden Gate. The wall in this section visible above the ground is the work of reconstruction, but many stones bearing the marks of great age are interspersed. The substructure stands upon an ancient wall of colossal masonry. The Golden Gate (Fig. 1) has two portals surmounted with semi-circular arches and entablature richly ornamented with acanthus foliage. It projects several feet above and beyond the abutting battlements. Since

the time of the crusades its portals have been walled up by the Moslems to shut out a Christian conqueror whose approach tradition has taught them to anticipate. The gate, as it now appears, probably dates from the time of Constantine, but it occupies the site of the east entrance to the temple (called in the Talmud, Shushan) through which Jesus triumphantly entered amid the hosannas of the multitude. These facts would seem to be a striking fulfilment of a prediction uttered by Ezekiel (Ezek. 44: 1-3). In the interior of the gate are two huge monoliths, now used as pillars, twelve and fourteen feet in length respectively, which are probably vestiges of the ancient gate. Great difficulties were encountered in excavating along the eastern wall, as the earth, being *débris*, had no sustaining power in the trenches. Also, the Moslem graves (Fig. 9) which skirt the wall were found to be an insuperable obstacle, except as they could be avoided by driving shafts at some distance from the wall and then tunneling inwards. This process revealed walls of heavy masonry fifty feet from the Haram wall, which probably formed a spacious promenade along the wall and in front of the Golden Gate. About fifty feet south of the Golden Gate there is a small postern which was probably cut through the wall for use after the Golden Gate was walled up.

The distance from the Golden Gate to the southeast corner of the temple plateau is one thousand feet.² The wall above the ground is the work of Sultan Selim I., constructed three hundred years ago; except that the one hundred feet nearest the corner is in part ancient masonry. At a break in the wall, one hundred feet from the southeast corner, are two gigantic arch stones eighteen feet long, which bulge out from the wall. These are believed to be the *voussoirs* of an arch of the Red Heifer Bridge which spanned the Kidron valley with double arches, and over which the red heifer was led to the Mount of Olives. We learn of this bridge and the sacrifice of the red heifer from the Talmud and from the Book of Numbers, chap. 19.

² If the frontispiece of this number and the frontispiece of the September BIBLICAL WORLD be placed end to end, the latter on the left hand side, a complete panorama of the landscape as it now appears from the Mount of Olives will be obtained.

The southeast corner of the temple area³ is in some respects the most interesting spot about Jerusalem. The wall rises more than seventy-seven feet above the present surface. The first fifty-four feet is ancient masonry, composed of large blocks as much as twenty feet in length and from three to six feet in height. They are dressed by an eight-tooth chisel one inch in width, these marks being intersected by other chisel marks at right angles forming what is known as the criss-cross pattern—a style of stone dressing confined almost entirely to the ancient masonry of the Temple Hill. A shaft was driven at this corner to the rock more than seventy-nine feet beneath the present surface, so that the total height of the wall at the present time, above and below ground, is one hundred and fifty-six feet and nine inches. Since the wall of the Royal Cloister surmounted the masonry at this point, the distance from the foundation rock to the roof of the temple porch must have been more than two hundred feet. Much of the earth which now covers the lower portion of the wall is débris, so that nearly the whole height of this vast wall of masonry must have been exposed to view in the time of Christ, and must have been visible to one descending the Mount of Olives on the opposite side of the Kidron. The wall at this point stands upon the brink of the declivity. When the bed of the Kidron was much nearer and deeper than at present, as has been said, one standing upon the Royal Cloister would have looked into an abyss three hundred feet in depth. Thus excavation has proved the truth of Josephus's statement as to the stupendous height of the wall at this point.⁴ This, too, is probably the position of the "pinnacle of the temple" referred to in the account of Christ's temptation.⁵ Had Jesus cast himself from this height into the Kidron valley three hundred feet below without sustaining any injury, an ignorant and superstitious people might well have regarded him as more than human and worthy of worship. This corner is also the site of the martyrdom of James, the brother of Jesus, head of the church at Jerusalem. According to Hegesippus, he was cast over the

³ See frontispiece of the September BIBLICAL WORLD, 1903, Fig. 1.

⁴ *Antiquities*, XV, xi, 5.

⁵ Matt. 4: 5, 6.

wall at this point because he refused to declaim against Christ and Christianity.

The lower course of the wall was found to be set into a cutting in the rock, for the purpose of preventing it from slipping into the gorge on the brink of which it stood. May this fact not throw light upon numerous passages of Scripture in which occurs the word "foundation," especially when Isaiah refers to the "sure



"ROBINSON'S ARCH" IN THE TEMPLE WALL.

foundations of Zion"? At the base of the southeast corner, imbedded in the native rock, was found the most interesting stone in the world, the chief corner-stone of the Hebrew sanctuary. It was found to be three feet eight inches high and fourteen feet in length; facing both ways, it bound the east and south walls together. It is finely dressed and polished except where it is hidden from view in the cutting, which would indicate that it had been prepared for the corner-stone. Alongside of it, in a rock-cut receptacle, was found a jar (now in the office of the Palestine Exploration Fund, London), which is believed to have contained the anointing oil used in connection with the

laying of the corner-stone. This stone was probably laid with impressive ceremonies in the presence of King Solomon, three thousand years ago. Sure and steadfast in its abiding position, it is a fit emblem of the Rock of Ages.⁶ Numerous Phœnician graffiti, incised or painted, were found upon the lower courses.

The Haram wall on the south side is nine hundred feet long, and the masonry corresponds to that in the east wall in all respects. A colossal course of masonry, known as the Great Course, consisting of stones six feet high, has been traced from the southeast corner to the Double Gate. The corner-stone of this course at the southeast angle is twenty-six feet long, six feet high, and seven feet wide; its weight is over one hundred tons. The stone stands twenty-three feet above the present surface, and over one hundred feet above the foundation stone. This Great Course is not quite horizontal, as it falls thirty inches from the Double Gate to the southeast corner. This mathematical inaccuracy was perhaps intended, according to a well-known principle in architecture, to correct an optical illusion on account of the semi-circular shape of the ground.

On a level with the Great Course are three gates, the Single, Triple, and Double Gates. All three are now walled up. The Triple and Double Gates divide the south wall into about three equal sections. The Double Gate is almost entirely concealed from view on account of the city wall abutting upon the Haram wall at this point. The excavations along the south wall revealed underground pavements, vaults, and tunnels which were either overflow canals for the great reservoirs, or conduits to conduct away the refuse of the sacrifices, or channels to supply water to the lower city. A signet stone was found bearing the inscription in old Hebrew "Haggai, son of Shebaniah." This is thought to refer to the prophet Haggai. The Great Course could not be traced west of the Double Gate; the stones underground east of it have finely dressed faces, while those west of the Gate have rough projecting faces; these two facts have been thought by some to indicate that the wall east of that gate is the work of

⁶ To it there are many references in the Sacred Volume, *e. g.*, Ps. 118:22, 23; Isa. 28:16; Matt. 21:42; Acts 4:11; Eph. 2:20, 21; 1 Pet. 2:6.

Solomon, while the wall west of it is the work of Herod when that monarch enlarged the courts of the temple.

The west wall of the Haram is fifteen hundred feet long. Within less than forty feet of the southwest corner there are three courses of stones which bulge from the wall. They extend along the wall fifty feet and are curved on the under surface. One stone is thirty-eight feet nine inches long and weighs ninety tons. They were first noticed by Dr. Robinson and recognized by him as the vestiges of an arch, on which account they are known as "Robinson's Arch." At this point Mount Moriah is separated from the west hill by the Tyropœan valley, originally a rugged ravine, but now filled with débris. Under the impression that they were the arch-stones of a bridge that spanned the ravine, Sir Charles Warren sunk a shaft forty feet from the wall. At the depth of forty-two feet he came upon the base of the pier, fifty feet by twelve, and eleven feet in height. On the pavement alongside, which formed the street in the time of Christ, they found the fallen arch-stones. One large arch-stone in the fall had broken through the pavement and had penetrated the stone roof of an artificial cistern, the bottom of which was seventy feet from the ancient surface, and one hundred and ninety feet below the top of the present wall.

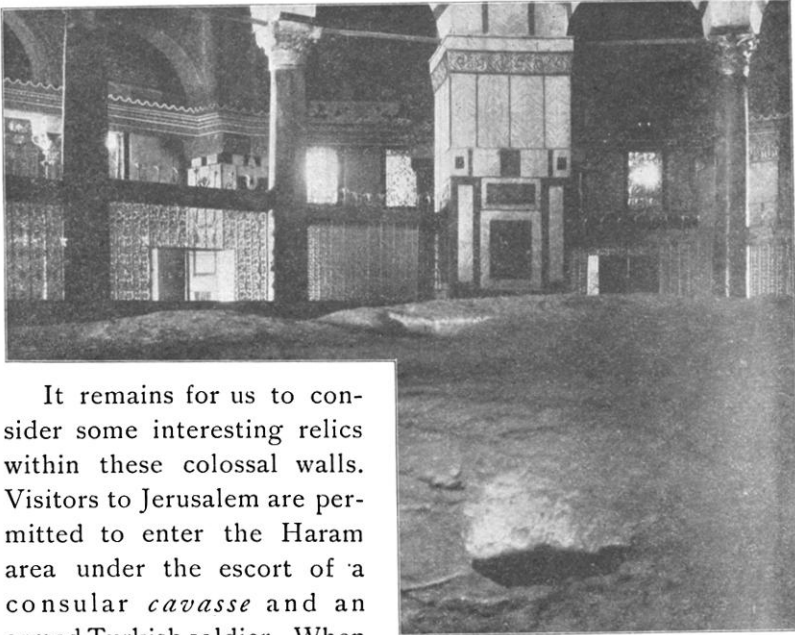
Various references are made to bridges spanning the Tyropœan valley. It is not possible to speak with certainty concerning the age of this viaduct. Some have thought it to be "the ascent unto the house of the Lord" which so fascinated the queen of Sheba.⁷ It is quite surely the bridge on which the Roman general Titus stood and pleaded with the Jews on the temple battlements to surrender, and so save their temple from destruction. It must have been a conspicuous feature of the Holy City to Christ and his disciples. The bridge was probably thrown down in the Roman destruction of Jerusalem, 70 A. D.

Other excavations revealed arches, chambers, subterranean passages, and vaults, which confirm the statement of Josephus that Jerusalem at the time of Christ was completely honey-combed by underground galleries. In these the Jews took

⁷ 1 Kings 10:4, 5.

refuge at the destruction of the city by Titus, and thousands miserably perished in them.

The west wall of the Haram area, composed of blocks of enormous size (as may be seen at the Jews' Wailing Place), is probably the work of Solomon, though reconstructed more or less above the surface.

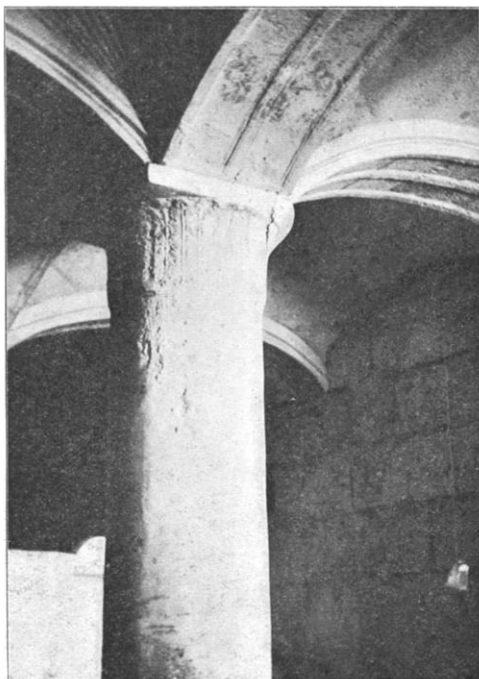


It remains for us to consider some interesting relics within these colossal walls. Visitors to Jerusalem are permitted to enter the Haram area under the escort of a consular *cavasse* and an armed Turkish soldier. When

one enters and surveys this historic plateau of thirty-six acres, he is awed by the thought that here occurred some of the most eventful scenes in the life of the Master. In the mind of the Moslem, too, it is second in sacredness only to Mecca. In the central part of the area (see the frontispiece, Fig. 4) is a raised platform approached by steps and paved with square flag-stone. At once the thought occurs: May not this terrace correspond more or less exactly with the sacred inclosure of the temple? At the northwest corner of the area we see a graceful minaret (Fig. 6), alongside of which is the cut scarp of rock on which

ARAUNAH'S THRESHING-FLOOR.

the Tower of Antonio stood, now occupied as a Turkish barracks. At the northeast corner are a series of arches through which we may look down into a deep trench running along the north wall; this has sometimes been called the "Pool of Bethesda," but it is probably a feature of the ancient fortifications. Here and there over the area are small, dome-roofed buildings which are either fountains or praying-places. In the center of the platform rises the Mohammedan mosque known as the "Dome of the Rock" (Fig. 5); for beauty and character of architecture it has been said to be unsurpassed. In its construction there are many pieces which exhibit the work of the crusaders, and perhaps even of the skilled workmen of Herod and Solomon.



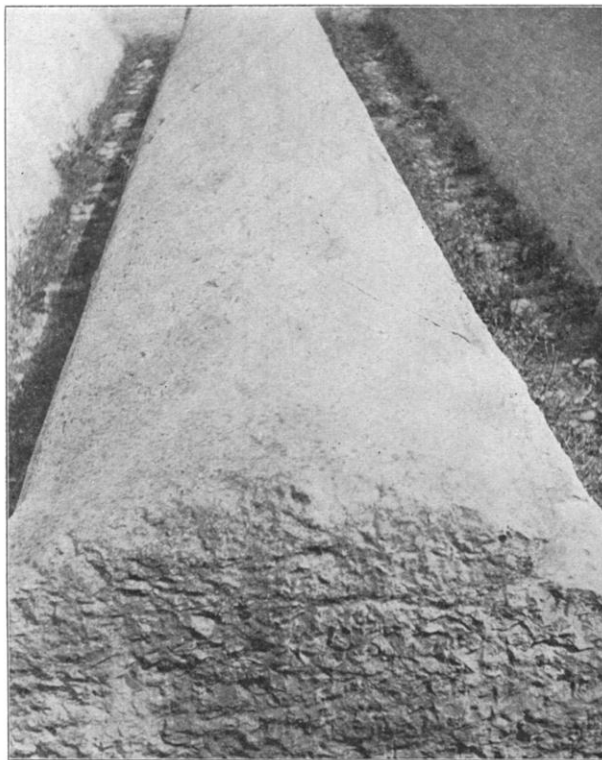
THE GREAT MONOLITH.

Historically, however, the most important thing is not the mosque, but the naked rock which the structure covers (see illustration, "Araunah's Threshing-Floor"). This exposed rock top of the temple hill is fifty-seven by forty-three feet in surface dimensions, and rises seven and one-half feet above the floor of the mosque. Here is the threshing-floor of Araunah, the Jebusite. Here tradition says Abraham offered Isaac. Here David erected his altar of thanksgiving.⁸ There are cuttings in the rock which indicate that here stood the altar of burnt offering. A large central opening penetrates the rock (see illustration) to a natural

⁸ 2 Sam. 24 : 25.

cavern beneath, reached by eleven steps. From the cavern there is a rock-cut channel covered with a marble slab and carefully guarded. Through these passages, according to some authorities, the refuse from the altar reached the Kidron; others think that the channel was connected with the fountain Gihon.

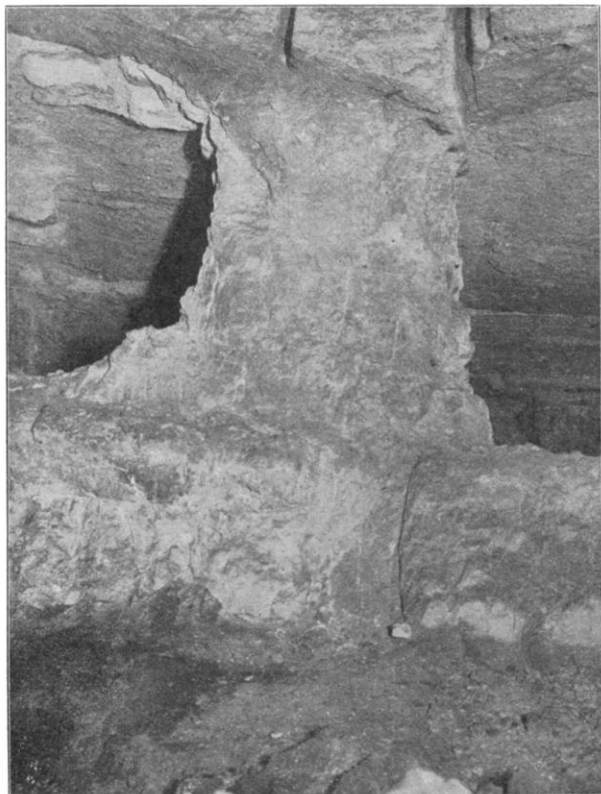
Beneath the south end of the Haram area there are extensive



A HALF-QUARRIED MONOLITH.

vaults. These chambers in the southeast corner are called "Solomon's Stables," and are an acre in extent. There are one hundred square pillars, arranged in fifteen rows, which sustain the platform. In the part of these vaults which is opposite the Double or Huldah Gate are many stones of cyclopean dimensions. One is of great interest (see illustration, "The Great Monolith"); it is a monolithic column twenty-one feet in height and twenty feet in circumference, surmounted by a Corinthian capital

of acanthus leaf. One could easily recognize it as a relic of great antiquity. Upon my first visit three Moslem soldiers had prevented me from taking pictures; but now I told my dragoman to bargain with them for the privilege of using the camera in this secluded place. As the only light was that which passed through



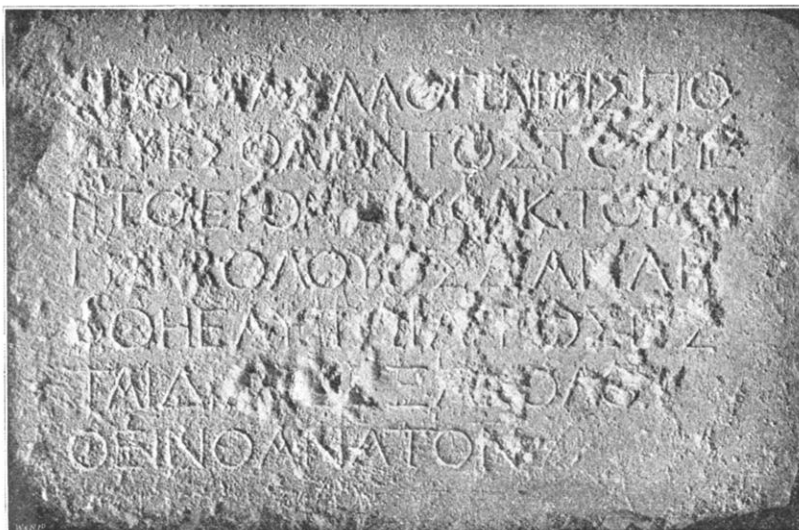
A FLASHLIGHT PHOTOGRAPH IN SOLOMON'S QUARRIES.

a small aperture in the wall, it required some minutes of exposure, but the result was satisfactory. Ferguson and Clermont-Ganneau think this monolith the work of Herod; others think it may be more ancient, and that originally it sustained a huge lintel instead of the Roman arch as now. Another monolith of similar dimensions (see "A Half-Quarried Monolith"),⁹ found partially quarried

⁹This half-cut monolith illustrates how columns were quarried. They were cut into the form designed as the quarrying proceeded. The part exposed to view has been given form and dimensions; the lower portion remains uncut as the workmen left it, still clinging to and forming a part of the native rock.

near the Russian Hospice, is thought to have been intended as a companion column, but was discarded because of a flaw. The Double or Huldah Gate, in the vestibule of which it stands, was the chief entrance to the temple at the time of Christ, and therefore we may be sure he often passed this way with his disciples. On one such occasion, when about to leave the temple, a disciple said: "Master, see what manner of stones . . . are here."

The Haram area beneath the surface is honey-combed by a



A STONE FROM "THE MIDDLE WALL OF PARTITION."

network of vaults, cisterns, and reservoirs, one of which, the "Great Sea," is capable of holding three million gallons of water. The three great cisterns constructed in the valley south of Bethlehem, known as "Solomon's Pools," now supply these reservoirs. Many scholars hold that both the pools and these vast rock caverns underneath the temple plateau were constructed by King Solomon.

As one contemplates the mural work of ancient or even modern Jerusalem, one naturally inquires: Whence came all this stone, from what quarry was it taken? There is a popular notion that the polished blocks of Solomon's temple were sent by

Hiram from Lebanon. But while it is recorded that Hiram sent cedar and fir trees for the construction of the temple, and artificers and masons to construct it, there is no mention of his sending stone. Besides, there is so much excellent limestone about Jerusalem that such labor would have been unnecessary. But the source of supply for all this stone was unknown until the caverns called "Solomon's Quarries" were discovered in 1852. Along the north wall there is a deep cut through the hill Bezetha on which the city stands. At the same place, too, there is a small entrance through the rock into vast caverns which reach far underneath the city. It is obvious that from these caverns the stone was taken for the building of the walls and other structures of the temple. The accompanying flashlight photograph shows one of the colossal pillars of rock left to sustain the roof of the underground quarry. Cuttings in the rock (as seen at the top of this pillar) which were left in the process of separating the blocks are plainly visible, and several massive blocks half-cut still adhere to the wall. Tiny cup-shaped hollows are seen, evidently designed to hold oil and wick to give light to the stone cutter. These caverns have never been fully explored, but are known to approach very near to the stone-cut passages beneath the convent of the Sisters of Zion, which run close to the northern wall of the Haram area. It is not extravagant to suppose that these excavations opened out upon the Temple area, and that through these or other tunnels the stone was brought to the surface in the locality where it was to be used.

Space permits me to mention only one other fragment from the Herodian sanctuary, genuine beyond all doubt (see illustration, "A Stone from the Middle Wall of Partition"). It is a stone from the "Soreg," a stone balustrade which separated the Court of the Gentiles from the Court of Israel.¹⁰ It is identified by the inscription upon it which notifies all gentiles not to pass that point upon the pain of death. These stones in the partition are several times referred to by Josephus. This one was found by Clermont-Ganneau, and is now in the Sultan's museum in Constantinople.

¹⁰ "Middle wall of partition" (Eph. 2:4).